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Hutbert's Candid Strictures.
Shrewsbury, 1807.

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CANDID STRICTURES

On several Passages in a recent Publication

ENTITLED

"Thoughts on the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland,"

IN A

LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

The Honorable H. G. BENNETT, M. P.

Written with a View to illustrate the real Principles and Character
of a NUMEROUS and RESPECTABLE Branch of the
ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

By C. Hulbert.

*To which is annexed, an accurate Account of the Origin, History,
Doctrines, and Opinions of the Methodists, from the*
"ENCYCLOPÆDIA PERTHENSIS."

"We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning this Sect,
we only know, that every where it is spoken against."——

Acts of the Apostles.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."——*Jesus.*

Shrewsbury :

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PREFACE.

THOUGH the name of the Hon. Mr. Bennett may not dignify the title page of "Thoughts on the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland," yet that work having been publicly appealed to by several of his friends as a proof of his literary, mental, and political qualifications, I hope there can be no impropriety in personally addressing him as the author.

In the following sheets I have endeavoured with the utmost candor and verity, to counteract a very fallacious charge, and unfortunately a prevalent opinion in the higher circles of life, that the methodists believe and openly preach the "calvinistical doctrines of exclusive salvation."——Whatever may be the opinion or sentiments of our worthy christian brethren, the Dissenters, Independants, and Baptists on "this fearful subject," is in no degree essential for a methodist vindicator to state. It is enough for him to know that in every separate religious party or church, there are men of great liberality, extensive utility, and unexceptionable piety.

In circumstances, entirely independant of the party whose sentiments I vindicate, no one can suspect me of sinister views; each must freely allow, the purity of the intention, the rectitude of the principle, and the ardent love of truth which prompted the address.

It is also presumed, the concise account of methodists, and methodism, copied verbatim from a work of such eminent merit, and established reputation as the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA PERTHENSIS*, will prove generally satisfactory; considering it as being either originally compiled, or carefully examined and approved, by the worthy learned editor Mr. A. Aitchison; and acknow-

ledged as correct by the Methodists themselves, it must carry instantaneous conviction of its perfect accuracy and impartiality.

I feel some degree of confidence, and even a slender hope that my humble effort, will not be altogether fruitless, nor without its success; several of my most respectable friends to whom I had the honour to read the manuscript previous to publication, having candidly declared, that till then they "always understood that the Methodists were Predestinarians." One worthy gentleman honestly assured me that the mistake was certainly general, and even cited instances where the Methodists had been persecuted, and injured, on that very account; at the same time, he generously offered his assistance and influence in correcting an error, so prejudicial, and so invariably received by his respectable acquaintance.

Thus encouraged, I intrude on the Public, yet cannot divest myself of an inward consciousness, that my youthful temerity may have led me on too precipitately, and that had I patiently waited in silence, the pen of some sage superior advocate, would ere long, have done more justice and credit to the cause and interest of that people, whose real character all must love and venerate.

Leaving the result with that GOOD BEING whose unworthy servant I am,

"I would be little and unknown,

"Lov'd and priz'd by HIM alone."

C. H.

LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE

HON. H. G. BENNETT, M. P.

SIR,

IT was not till the author of "Free Thoughts" * had very justly complimented your "Essay on the protestant ascendancy in Ireland," as a "work of abundant merit," that I knew you had entered the lists of political discussion, and so nobly distinguished yourself in the cause of the persecuted catholic.

Full of expectation, and eager to peruse, I instantly procured a copy, and read with avidity, statements of real facts, sound arguments, and candid observations, the prominent features of many a page. But, while I thus freely, and disinterestedly, pay a tribute so richly due to transcendent merit; justice and candor will allow me with equal freedom and impartiality, to delineate and correct, the injurious tendency of several passages and sentiments, as far as they have a reference to a respectable branch of the protestant community, nominally dissenting from the established church.

Page 42, you say, "If indeed the profession of principles of intolerance could authorise the infliction of penalties, with how much greater severity of legislative enactment ought we to repress the diffusion of those Calvinistical doctrines of exclusive salvation, *now openly preached* in a society, which by the latest accounts exceeds 100,000," and for

* A popular pamphlet, published during the late election at Shrewsbury.

your authority refer us to Myles's History of the Methodists, and to the minutes of the third conference, in which you say "will be found this *very curious question*."

"Can an unbeliever, whatever he be, challenge any thing of God's justice? Ans. *Absolutely nothing but hell; and this is a point which we cannot too much insist on.*"

"Now, Sir, I am entirely at a loss how to fix your precise meaning to the term "Calvinistical exclusive salvation," which you state to be openly preached amongst the society of methodists.

Not daring to trust to my own knowledge implicitly, I have consulted those who have constantly attended their lectures for these last 40 or 50 years, but cannot meet with any one that ever knew a preacher to use it. If you mean the Calvinistical doctrines of partial redemption, election and reprobation, surely in consulting Myles's History, you overlooked a remarkable sentence on the 15th page, which says, "In the latter end of the year 1740, on account of some disputes which had arisen, Mr. Wesley printed a sermon against the Calvinistic notion of predestination."

You must also have entirely lost sight of another not a *very curious*, but a *plain question* (page 291) proposed by conference in 1802, viz. Ques. "What is the direct antidote to methodism, &c.?" Ans. "Antinomianism and unconditional predestination, &c."

But, Sir, I cannot think so meanly of you as to believe, you would with such a book in your hands, wilfully criminate and expose yourself by gross misrepresentation. No!—I am convinced you must have trusted for your quotation and authority, to the weak, invidious performance of some ignorant, angry, caviller*, who had never read either the writings of

* "HAPPILY we are not guilty of the sin of methodism, but if we were, we cannot so far compliment the pamphlets which have lately appeared in opposition to that sin, as to think they would have effected our conversion. One Reverend Gentleman, addressing his parishioners, told them in the first page, that he did not properly understand the characters of the persons he was about

the venerable Wesley, nor of his pious and learned advocate the vicar of Madely.

I can assure you, Sir, the methodists have ever done, and do still openly preach the scriptural doctrines of universal, conditional, inclusive salvation. Their sentiments are indeed in this respect so notorious, that even those who have only read Evans's superficial "Sketch of all Denominations," must perceive your deficiency in theological information.

With respect to the question you conceive to be so much a curiosity, few readers of the writings of the evangelists would see any thing *very curious* in it; but on the contrary would consider it as a point which cannot be too much insisted on. For, who that remembers and believes that important, comprehensive, final charge given by the great founder of our religion to his faithful apostles and their successors, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," but must say "absolutely, an unbeliever can challenge nothing but hell of the Justice of God!"

By unbelievers the methodists do not mean heathens and all those who never heard the gospel, nor ever had the divine testimony offered to their credence; but only such as having heard it faithfully preached, con-

to describe. Whether our perusal extended to the second page, is a secret we keep to ourselves. Another did not so much as know that there were distinct classes or communities of the methodists, and he attributed to those of one distinction what was true exclusively of another. What could we infer from this ignorance, and indeed we cannot acquit from this mistake the writer before us, who appears to be by much the best informed of any we have lately noticed. He says, page 36, "In the ordinary methodist societies, the calamities of the Calvinistic doctrines are generally prevalent." In the chapels where the liturgy of the church is used, but without episcopal sanction, Calvinism again is usually taught," but does he not know that the arminian methodists abhor these doctrines, that they insist on the arminian interpretation of the articles of the church, as the only true and proper sense of them, and that against these very arminians the principal portion of his reasoning is levelled."

Review of "Hints for the Security of the established Church" in the LITERARY PANORAMA, for November, 1806, a work of the first RESPECTABILITY and MERIT.

tinue in obstinacy, refusing to believe it, or those *worst of infidels*, who possessing only a nominal faith, live in open violation of gospel precepts. Now, Sir, if you mean this kind of exclusion from salvation, the methodists do openly 'preach it, nor do I know of any sect of christians who do not, for most parties, however they may differ in non-essentials, will jointly agree in saying, "That without faith it is impossible to please God." "That faith without works is void;" and that without "Holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Though I have read more than "a little of the History of the Christian Church, I have not discovered "the liberal use which its ghostly Fathers have made of "this tenet of exclusive salvation," as preached by the methodists, Nor do I believe that Lord Redefdale would ever "attach such dreadful consequences to the belief of such a tenet, as to attribute to its influence the last rebellion in Ireland." If he does, let him consult facts, for to the immortal honour of the Irish methodists it is affirmed*, that "notwithstanding they form a body of more than 23,000 members, not one of them ever joined the rebels either from fear or inclination."

But, Sir, you must mean by the "Calvinistical doctrines of exclusive salvation," sentiments scarcely ever publicly declared by any party, viz. that God by an irreversible decree has excluded a part of mankind from a possibility of being saved, while he has finally chosen others to certain salvation, without any reference to conduct or works.

If this, be the doctrine you conceive to be preached by the methodists, let me again in the name of the whole body honestly assure you, that they are its avowed opponents.—Were you to ask them their opinion on this "fearful subject," they would immediately answer.

* I heard a respectable Irish missionary, who had visited every part of our distracted sister kingdom, during her extraordinary troubles, declare it to a public congregation in Barton chapel, near Manchester, and many others have repeatedly said the same at different times and places.

That whatever an independent God decrees he must have a pleasure in ;

But, " as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,"

Consequently, we never can believe that he has decreed it—

Or they would simply say, " God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation ; he that feareth God and worketh righteousness shall be accepted with him."

What you say, "the independants enjoy alone," is the exclusive privilege of the methodists, they are the only people, and they glory in the *peculiarity*, who have opened their arms to receive into their community " Scrupulous Believers," " and all such as having a desire to flee from the wrath to come" manifest it by a reformation of life. But from *all* they expect and demand a suitable conformity in discipline and morality of conduct ; and such is the wise policy and pious purposes of their rules, that when observed, peace, order, and happiness must ensue.

The popularity of your Pamphlet will of course bring it into the hands of some poor timorous anxious methodist, and how will his fears be excited, when he learns that the highly respectable author is brother to a Peer, and a member of the British senate.—Poor methodists ! he will say, how you are but misrepresented. Should the situation of public affairs ever lead to a discussion of your rights, how would the Hon. Mr. Bennett represent you?—Not as the best citizens of the empire, not as the real benefactors of their country, not as the friends of humanity and of men, but as holding and openly preaching doctrines and sentiments, far more dangerous than popery.

By this, Sir, I do not wish to insinuate that you ever

meant to injure the methodists by misrepresentation, yet I fear you will effectually have done it undesignedly. The idea that the methodists hold the "fearful Calvinistical doctrines of exclusive salvation," has already shewn its baneful injurious consequences, in persecutions from mistaken opulent individuals,* and your publication has been admired, and, no doubt, will long be read by those who have a share in the legislature of the country.

It is from men in power that the methodists have every thing to fear; men elevated beyond a possibility of troubling themselves in discovering the real opinions of a party by actual investigation: Men who would take all for granted a venerable dignitary of the Church, or a popular controversialist might advance:—Men who would readily consent to the enactment of any law they might be taught to believe, was for the interest of the established church, or the benefit of some of her narrow-minded clergy.—There may be men who would do this, even to the utter ruin or unjustifiable privation, of the privileges of a LOYAL, BENEVOLENT, PIOUS, USEFUL, NUMEROUS and RESPECTABLE body of his Majesty's best subjects.

That they have ever been honourably distinguishable for loyalty to their King, let the writings of their eminent founder and father be witnesses; let that ex-

* A certain truly worthy personage of exalted rank, unfortunately labouring under this mistaken opinion, very lately called upon a respectable local preacher in Shrewsbury, and charged him "never to presume to preach again in a neighbouring village, for it was well known that his party believed, that if a man was elected or one of God's chosen people, he might live as he pleased, and still be sure of salvation."—It is needless to state that the answer was in direct contradiction, and a positive disavowal of the sentiment. But, alas! how hard it is to controvert mistaken zeal, or conquer invincible prejudice. by which the best intentions are often misguided; the consequence was, a restless mandate was issued from the *Mansion House*, and the poor terror-struck *peasants* and *tenantry*, were compelled to give up the privilege of worshipping God in their own houses, and with that privilege their only means of mental improvement, for the methodists were finally expelled from the neighbourhood.

cellent essay * written by the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, during the unfortunate struggle betwixt Great Britain, and her Colonies, bear its ample testimony.

That they are now not only LOYAL to the best of sovereigns; but faithful, and from principle attached to the best of established churches, the different resolutions of conference† which are acknowledged as the binding laws and public acts of the whole body will fully prove.

That they are truly BENEVOLENT and philanthropic, the institution of strangers friend, or benevolent so-

* LORD NORTH was so pleased with Mr. Fletcher's performance, that he sent to him, and desired him to state what he wanted. The answer was worthy the advocate of loyalty and methodism; "I want but one thing, which is not in your lordship's power to give me, and that is *more grace*."

† In 1792, when political disputes ran high in every department of the state, we find them giving these directions. "None of us shall either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which he lives; we are to observe that the oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers, and that honour to the king is there connected with the fear of God. In the minutes of the next conference held at Leeds in 1793, the same spirit of fidelity is manifested.—"We intreat our societies at large to continue as usual in connection with the church of England;"—"We feel the most unfeigned loyalty to the king, and a sincere attachment to the constitution;—We reverence the government: are conscious of the many blessings we enjoy under our gracious sovereign, and are thankful to God for them." In a second address published in the same year it is said, "we are determined as a body to remain in connection with the church of England; you have known us long, and loved and esteemed us long, and we believe will receive our solemn declaration as proceeding from upright hearts, and we do assure you that we have no design or desire of making our societies separate churches.—It has been intimated that some of our body are defective in loyalty, shew us the men and the proofs of their guilt, and we will instantly cut them off from our connection, as unworthy of any office in the church of God, as enemies to their king and country? We hold our sovereign king George in high estimation, we love our country, and its constitution, and as far as christian ministers can go, consistently with their functions and the oracles of God will support our king and country with all we are and have :"—And the last conference in 1806, most strenuously enforces adherence to the following established rules; "wherever divine service is performed by us in England on the Lord's day in church hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the prayers of the church, or our venerable father, Mr. Wesley's abridgement of it, or at least the lessons appointed by the calendar." With respect to smuggling they say, "our standing rule expressly prohibits the buying and selling unaccustomed goods.

Q. How shall we put a stop to smuggling?

- A. 1. Speak tenderly and frequently of it in every society near the coast.
2. Carefully disperse Mr. Wesley's word to a smuggler.
3. Expel all those who will not leave it off.
4. Silence every local preacher who defends it.

cieties, in almost every populous or trading town in the kingdom—The thousands who have been rescued from premature death and the grave by their timely interference and aid*—The liberal support by voluntary

* By the last audited accounts of the benevolent society in London, it appears that from January 1804 to January 1805; no fewer than 2574 families had been relieved out of the fund, besides subscriptions to dispensaries, printing books for the society, &c.—I have extracted the following cases from the report of the same year, though I could have selected cases of even greater distress, and where as timely aid was afforded, of which I had personal knowledge while resident in Manchester.

THE VISITORS of this society were last year requested to enquire into a case of distress; which was represented as a very affecting one:—They accordingly went, and found a young woman lying upon straw in a cold, damp cellar, in one of the worst streets in *St. Giles's*; reduced by want and disease to the lowest state of human wretchedness, without money or friends, or any one to commiserate her case.—The other women who occupied the same cellar, were of the most abandoned and profligate description, and the smell of the place so offensive, that the visitors could scarcely bear it; after many urgent inquiries, with much delicacy and many tears, she told them that she had lived with her parents at D—— in the county of ——, till about a year and a quarter ago, when her mother was taken ill with a violent fever which terminated in death; her father caught the infection, and soon followed his wife to the grave, leaving the daughter to seek out some new means of support.—She determined upon honest servitude, and soon after got a place in a very respectable family in the neighbourhood of Bedford-square. After being in this situation nearly twelve months, she was seduced from it by false promises, and then thrown upon the town. Feeling for her situation, a member of the committee obtained her admission into the Lock Hospital. At this time she was not expected to live, but from the kind attention of the nurse, and the medical help administered, she is now perfectly recovered. The society have good reason to hope, they have not only been the means of rescuing this young woman from a miserable and untimely death, but likewise, under God, of her moral reformation, as she appears most deeply to feel for her former unhappy situation: and dreads those evils which led her into such misery. The society are happy to add, that a very respectable family have engaged her as a servant.

JOHN RICHARDSON, by trade a staymaker, had lived in credit and reputation,—he was found by one of the visitors in a garret, No. 29, *Water lane, Fleet-street*, his wife nearly ready to lye in, and three small children in the utmost affliction.—When the visitor first saw them their case was very afflicting indeed, the mother all in rags, and almost distracted, weeping over her youngest child, which was reduced to skin and bone; and the other two children appeared literally starving to death. Perhaps human wretchedness can scarcely be experienced in a greater degree than this poor woman felt at this moment; having herself fasted for twenty-four hours, and seeing her children dying by inches, she had stripped off the last gown she had, and sent it to the Pawn-brokers; who, instead of returning her a few pence for it as she expected, sent the gown back saying it was worth *nothing*. Hope, the last resource of the wretched, now left her, Her husband, no longer able to bear the sight, went out in the morning, and remained absent some hours; fearing to return, as he expected to find his poor children dead:—but in this extremity, providence directed one of the visitors to the famished family with relief,—by degrees the children began to recover, the mother regained her usual health, and, through the

contributions of numerous and well conducted Sunday schools.*—The large sums they have subscribed for public or national purposes† are each splendid testimonials.

But could you follow them to the couch of the dying man, to the woe-covered bed of afflictive disease, or to the cold, comfortless, forlorn habitation of ignorance, misery and want, you would there see, that their public benevolence is far exceeded by their pri-

blessing of God, the whole family are thus snatched from the very gates of the grave. A letter has likewise been obtained for the poor woman for the London lying-in hospital,—and the family are still on the books of the society.

“In the selection of objects this society, makes no distinction on account of nation, sect or party to which the sufferer belongs; these are distinctions they totally disregard—nor is it important for the object to be recommended by a subscriber or benefactor. DISTRESS, wherever found, is the ‘only recommendation required.’”

Many conceive that there are few people in distress, but what may gain a timely relief by application to the officers of their respective parishes, but perhaps “the following circumstance may serve to shew the difficulty of obtaining parochial relief.—One of the committee sent his servant to represent the case of a person in great distress and affliction, to the overseer of the parish of —, but instead of condescending to enquire into the particulars of the case, the overseer (possibly irritated with repeated applications:) knocked the messenger down for his presumption in continuing to make his request.”—What a pity that such iron-hearted men should have at their disposal the comfort and lives of so many of our poor unfortunate brethren.

See the nature design, &c. of the strangers' friend society for 1805.

* In December last no less than 350l. was collected in Stockport chapel, for the benefit of the Sunday Schools.—In the prospectus for a new school erecting there, we find the following highly interesting paragraph—“The foundations are already laid, and the structure is rising before you. The plan is large and expensive, and is estimated to cost upwards of *Four thousand Pounds*, besides the purchase of the ground rent, which is very desirable. To leave any debt upon the premises would materially injure the design, which is to make an establishment for the education of the poor, equal to the population of the town, *free of all rent and teachers' wages.*” In other trading towns the annual collections in their chapels for the same purpose, are seldom less than 150l. and frequently double that sum; they have also monthly and quarterly collections for their own poor, which generally amount to the same or larger sums annually.

† Upwards of 1948l. was collected last year in aid of the Patriotic Fund, independent of the large sums which many respectable individuals subscribed at public meetings, &c. but in many places such as Manchester for instance, the amount collected was given in with the collections in the established churches and chapels, so cannot be exactly ascertained. In the year 1798, when every one was anxious to contribute to the assistance of government according to his ability by voluntary subscription; in Hull alone, at the vestry of the Methodist chapel, no less than 940l. was almost instantaneously subscribed.

vate philanthropy.* That they are pious, the constant persecutions they patiently endure for righteousness sake are standing monuments.†

That they are and have been USEFUL; a grateful Host can testify; for they have literally called light out of darkness, order and happiness, from confusion and wretchedness.

But to be convinced of all their unexampled zeal and usefulness, let them lead us across the Atlantic, to the barren and dreary shores of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.—Let us traverse with them vast deserts and snow-covered mountains, in search of untutored natives, or almost infidel colonists.

Let us go with their zealous missionary to his majesty's islands in the western inhospitable clime,—there behold his unwearied efforts in the instruction and conversion of the ignorant oppressed African,—notice the heaven-like effects of his simple instructive discourses,—See our sable brethen abandoning their

* I am now intimately acquainted with several opulent and respectable methodists in Manchester, who anxiously seek for real objects of distress, and annually set apart a certain portion of their income for pious and charitable purposes.

The late Mrs. Barlow of Rhodes, near Manchester, was the common benefactor of the neighbourhood. How often have I heard her in the simple language of her heart to say to her maid, "Come, Mary, get your basket, we must go and see poor old Fanny, old John, &c. to-day, they'll be wanting something."

"Her house was known to all the vagrant train,
"She chid their wand'rings but reliev'd their pain."

The present Mrs. Fletcher of Madely, perhaps never had her superior in the same rank of life for piety, benevolence, and real usefulness, and I could give the illustrious names of many other living monuments of real philanthropy amongst the methodists, but they will all be known, and richly "recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

† So notorious is the piety of the methodists, that if even a clergyman of the established church, happens to be a little more circumspect in his conduct, or more zealous in the discharge of his duty than the generality of his brethren, he is immediately branded with the opprobrious name of Enthusiast or Methodist, and perhaps his company avoided as an infectious person or a sower of schism, yet no man commands so much respect, nor can be said to be so truly valuable and useful, as the humble, devout, indefatigable clergyman; and if there be one class of good men I love more than another, it must be conscientious, unbiassed, upright ministers of the church of England. "Good men in all ages have been what the foolish world call *Methodists*."

prejudices and superstitions—forgetting the ferocity of the savage—learning the nature and beneficent purposes of the true God—believing that they have souls destined for immortality—that they are sinful, accountable beings, and will one day be judged at the same bar with their tyrannic masters.

While these truths are clearly and fully enforced, we should find the man of God with equal ardour and success, pathetically pointing those most unfortunate of men, to the exemplary sufferings and patience of the blessed Jesus, and the glorious extensive benefits of his mission and death.

But if we only observe the beneficial effects of their instruction, in a political point of view, how exalted they appear; for notwithstanding that christianized slaves, are convinced that slavery is in no degree either sanctioned, or encouraged, but is contrary to the spirit of christianity, they become conscientiously obedient to their unfeeling and less civilized holders.*—The effects too are as happy to themselves, in that hut where at every accustomed opportunity, drunkenness and all the various species of barbarous wickedness had prevailed. Now temperance, order, resignation, content.

* “ Sunday evening last, a very pathetic discourse was preached at the methodist chapel in this town, by the Rev. Mr. Kingston, when a collection was made towards defraying the expences attending sending out and maintaining Missionaries amongst the negro slaves in the West Indies.—Mr. K. estimated the present number of converted Africans in the island of Antigua alone, at 3500, and represented them as being the most industrious, peaceable and obedient slaves: as a proof he declared, that during the late insurrections not one in connection with the people called methodists was known to rebel — Having been seven years a Missionary himself, Mr. Kingston was enabled to mark the good effects christianity had produced in the minds and condition of such as had embraced it.—It had converted their bed of boards into the likeness of down; and was a constant source of consolation to those who literally had no other comfort in this, but the hope of another and a better world.”

Shrewsbury Chronicle, Nov. 2, 1805.

I have very recently consulted Mr. Kingston on the subject of Missions, and he informs me “ that the methodists have now labouring in the West Indies, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, thirty-one missionaries, who have the care of 16,358 souls in society, these, with about 100 000 more, who regularly attend their teaching and preaching, and must be more or less reformed in principle and practice, may by their example influence or affect in some degree 100,000 more.”

ment, love and peace, sweeten every bitter cup, and make even the hard bed of a slave the envy of a king.

Let us survey the most uncivilized parts of the united kingdom, and wherever the methodist missionaries have unfurled the peaceful banner of their heavenly Master, we shall find the blessed effects of their piety and zeal.

The ignorant, undomesticated peasant inhabiting the wilds and bogs of Ireland—The dark and lawless tanners of Cornwall—The brutal ferocious colliers of Kingswood and Newcastle, have each listened to the persuasive discourses of these evangelizing teachers, and are now happy witnesses of their perseverance and success, * many of them (much to the credit of religion) having since risen from their degraded situation to the height of opulence and respectability, and are now liberally dispensing the good they have received.

The almost inaccessible and rugged mountains of Wales, are now resounding with reiterated praises of the Redeemer, while every village and every vale gratefully acknowledge the heaven-born love and peace true religion introduces.

But why look we at a distance for the blessed effects of methodism? Let us visit the rustic in his cottage, the enviable man who has the happiness to be one of that community. Ask him the particulars of his past life, he will tell us he was once a drunkard, a swearer, a merciless man, cruel to his wife, a tyrant to his family, and one of the most abandoned miserable of

* What wonderful visible moral effects through a divine blessing have been wrought by the preaching of the methodists among the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, and Newcastle, the tanners in Cornwall, and many others, who before were the terror of all around them, are well known by all that have enquired into these matters; and have been candidly acknowledged by eminent persons on solemn occasions.

Kingsbury's Apology for Village Preaching.

The same may be said of Coalbrook Dale, Ketley, &c. where numbers of the hardened sons of Vulcan have been melted into all the soft complacency and amiability of Christianity, and are now sparkling ornaments, blazing and shining lights in their religious profession.

wretches. But, oh ! the happy change ! he now blesses the hour he first heard a methodist preacher, or listened to the wise reproof of some neighbouring brother.— Let us go from house to house, wherever methodism prevails ; and we shall find parents, husbands, wives, and even children, blessing the Lord for some great change wrought in their families ; some one, as they generally express themselves, has been turned from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness. — Methodism not only moralizes the conduct, but it improves the manners and condition of the poor. The labourer's once neglected habitation, orchard, garden, and attire, change with the possessor and soon wear the appearance of neatness, fertility and cleanliness.

Even from this simple yet important view of christianity, the mind of the beholder must naturally be led to the contemplation of the divine Cause. Oh ! Sir ! what has proud philosophy to put into competition with the religion of the humble Jesus ? What have the blasphemous writings of a Voltaire and his colleagues effected in a neighbouring kingdom ?—The black pages of Gallic History will record and transmit to an astonished posterity.—But what has the pious teaching of Christianity by a Wesley and his followers done for *our* happy Isle ?—FACTS are before us, there needs no panegyric ; and your liberal and improved mind will make a just comparison, and draw the obvious inference, that methodism so far from being censurable, demands the countenance and support of every friend to his country and peace.

Not only amongst the poor and illiterate, does the influence of genuine christianity as taught by the methodists so conspicuously display itself ; but even in the splendid residence of the opulently wealthy, once the scene of noisy mirth, unhallowed gaiety and pleasure, now becomes a hospital for the sick, or a sanctuary for the friendless and forlorn.

Ask any of those once gay votaries of pleasure, what proportion there is between their former and present enjoyments, and they will tell you, an infinite disproportion. The pleasures we once so deludedly, fondly, and incessantly pursued, were full of mortifications, disappointments and painful after-reflections; but the delights we now experience,* are subject to no alloy, for while we relieve the distressed, or instruct the ignorant, we do the work of the deity and partake of his happiness.

Let us attend with the methodists to their religious assemblies; see their humble devotion and fraternal affection; at parting, observe the man of fortune, grasps the hand of his (poor perhaps) dependant brother, with all the ecstasy of sincere friendship and real regard.

But oh! Sir, could you see a methodist in the last

* Bristol, April 15th, 1804, died Mrs. Roberts, wife of Thomas Roberts, Esq. and daughter of the late Wm. Randolph, Esq. of this city, a lady in whom every amiable quality was supported by real piety and sound understanding, sincerely beloved in life, and most deeply regretted in death." Such was the brief account furnished by the provincial papers. Her former affection for the pleasures and vanities of this world; her after-discovery of their deceit, and the superior gratifications afforded by true religion, will be fully exemplified by two short extracts from her Letters.—In one, dated Nov. 12th, 1793, she says, "Soon after the London Conference we removed to Bristol, and my mother attended Guinea-street chapel, I piqued myself on being free from prejudice, saying, a sermon was to my mother what a play or ball was to us; it soothed her care, and diverted her attention. Indeed I was often staggered at the comfort she received, and said, if I could feel as much as she did from hearing, I would go too." In another Letter to the same person she afterwards writes—"There is a blessed reality in religion, even in the taste I have of it, that those attached to the most *refined* pleasures of the world with every thing that affluent elegance can bestow, can never conceive—this I can testify."—"Her benevolence and charity, like the other traits of her character, did not court the light, she did not sound a trumpet. But, as before her marriage, she devoted the *whole* of her income to God, so afterwards her heart was only bounded by her ability."

Vide Methodist Magazine for January 1807.

Dr. Disney Alexander, an eminent physician, now living, was once not only strongly attached to the vanities of the world, but a confirmed infidel. In this state of mind he continued several years, glorying in his superior discernment, his final conquest over all religious prejudice, and his freedom from the shackles of the gospel.

Necker on the Importance of Religious Opinions and Paley's Evidences of Christianity, were made instrumental in his conversion, and he is now a zealous happy christian and *methodist*, gratuitously preaching the gospel, and prescribing for the infirmities of the poor.

triumph of faith,—could you witness the concluding scene of a good man's life,*—how despicable the pageantry of a court, the splendour of nobility, the Statesman's popularity, or the blood-stained laurels of the hero would appear: when in full enjoyment of all his faculties, with meek submission to the summons of the king of kings, the christian resigns his family, his friends, his *all*, praying, rejoicing and singing, he dies the triumphant conqueror of this world, its affections and propensities,—enters the heavenly city amidst the reiterated plaudits and acclamations of its glorious inhabitants!—If such be the inimitable effects of the doctrines and principles of the methodists, let them be either *calvinistical*, *diabolical*, or *angelical*, they must be *admirable*.—But their system is neither angelical, diabolical, nor calvinistical, but truly evangelical, the genuine tenets of the established church, founded on the scriptures of truth.

No terrible soul-chilling anathemas, no obscure, irrational dogmas, ever disgrace the pages of their writers, nor the pulpits of their preachers; but with true gospel, simplicity, they invariably teach “Repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, inward and outward holiness” as the grand duty of man; while pardon, peace, and eternal felicity, are represented as the certain result and free gift of the God of grace.—In fact, they are like ancient and holy Paul, determined to know nothing, to preach nothing, but “Christ and him crucified.”—The messiah's glorious proclamation in Beattie's admirable poem on the excellence of christianity, contains nearly the substance of all their public discourses.

——— “Hear my favour'd people hear!
Repent, for heaven's eternal reign is near;

* See thousands of happy instances recorded in the *Methodist Magazine* since its first publication.

Come ye, whom long laborious care employs,
 Whom doubts alarm, whom servitude annoys;
 Come bear my burden, to my yoke agree,
 Ye weak, ye heavy laden, come to me,
 My yoke is easy, and my burden light;
 Hope cheers my servant, endless joys requite.
 Comfort I bring, and mercy unconfin'd,
 And peace on earth, and good will to mankind;
 My law no more in thunders I proclaim,
 Thron'd in thick darkness and tempestuous flame,
 Rich offerings, no longer I require
 Or glittering altars crown'd with costly fire;
 I ask, and what I ask my words impart,
 Repentance, faith, and purity of heart.
 Come then my people, listen and believe.
 Seek ye shall find me, ask you shall receive;
 Come for the joys of heaven on earth I send,
 Come to your Lord, your Saviour, and your friend."

That they are NUMEROUS* and RESPECTABLE, the crowds of the genteel and middling ranks as well as those in the humbler walk of life, who regularly attend their places of public worship in such cities and towns as London, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Nottingham, &c. are a mass of public evidence.

* The minutes of the last Conference, held at Leeds in August, 1806, represent their numbers in Society to be as follows:

In Great Britain	—	—	110,803
In Ireland	—	—	23,773
Gibraltar	—	—	40
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland	—	—	1418
West India whites	1775	}	14,940
Coloured people, &c.	13165		
United States—whites	95628	}	119,945
Coloured people, &c.	24316		

Total — 270,919

Of these upwards of 109,000 are found in England and Wales, to which we may add 109,000 more, who are thorough Methodists in sentiment, equally as upright in their conduct, and as constant at their places of worship, but from some modest motive or other, have not as yet ventured to have their names enrolled on the class papers.

To these we may further add, the younger branches of families, and those who are only generally influenced by their doctrines, fond of their preaching, and considerably reformed in life, making about 218,000 more, forming in the whole, nearly half a million of souls, or one twentieth part of the population of the kingdom and principality.

Thus Sir, I have humbly endeavoured in as brief a manner as possible, to shew you what the methodists *do not*, and what they *do preach*, and have pointed out the general consequences of their preaching, their numbers and claim to respectability. Not that every one who professes to be of their communion, is a saint or holy person—No, there was a Judas in the first, and there have been deceivers like him in every subsequent christian church; even some have been expelled from the methodists: yet this does not detract from their real character as a body of upright christians, and I am bold to affirm, that their genuine piety is equal, if not superior, to that of any other sect or party whatever.—But, for a more particular, yet concise description of these commonly persecuted people, I would refer you to the *Encyclopædia Perthenis*, a work of such approved candour and merit, as cannot be suspected either of partiality or injustice.

Should my feeble attempt, Sir, to raise the methodists in your estimation be crowned with the desired success,—I am happy.—On the contrary, if my anxious effort prove altogether fruitless and abortive, let it be ascribed to the ignorance and incompetency of the advocate, and not to the weakness or demerit of the cause.

While I acknowledge the almost unwarrantable liberty I have taken in addressing a Member of the British Senate with such plainness of speech, *like the honest apologist of Quakerism*, I would have even my king to be acquainted with the principles and sentiments of the party I vindicate.

Though some may conceive you have injured by ignorantly misrepresenting a liberal, candid, body of christians, they do not on that account think you an improper Representative in Parliament.—With myself they admire your political principles in general, and have no doubt but that experience will greatly improve them.

The suavity of your manners, the modesty and ingenuoufness of some of your late public appeals and harangues, have left with many *here*, the most flattering opinion of your future celebrity and conduct. And I am assured, Sir, by some of your respectable, intelligent friends, that they are anxiously looking forward to the day, when thorough investigation shall have discovered to you, the principles and claims of every considerable religious party under the British government.—When mature deliberation shall have formed your judgement, and stript your mind of every degree of prejudice,—when your “skill in the laws and intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of political economy,” shall be unquestionably confirmed by practice and experience—when your truly patriotic zeal shall be fully identified by doing real good to your country, and when by an immoveable attachment to the principles of rectitude and justice, you shall have proved yourself to be, the *unbiaffed* champion of the British Constitution.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

With profound Respect,

Your humble obedient Servant,

C. HULBERT.

Shrewsbury,
January 16, 1807.

☞ While the preceding STRICTURES were in the Press, it appeared to the Author as only just and honourable to signify his intention to Mr. BENNETT, and to give him an outline of the meditated Address.—Before the last sheet was printed off, the following gentlemanly Answer was received :

London, Jan. 24, 1807.

I wish to lose no time in assuring you, that I shall ever feel most obliged to any one, who will enable me to contradict any aspersion, which I may have been supposed to direct against so respectable and numerous a body of men, as that part of our established church called Methodists.—From the candor and fairness of your Letter, I am satisfied I shall meet with the same in your Pamphlet, and I shall consider myself under a great obligation, if you will give orders to your printer, to forward some copies to me as soon as it is printed.—The sentence of which you complain, was founded upon what appeared to me, to be a species of Creed, which I found in the work entitled “ Myles’s History of the Methodists,” and as my object was to shew, that simple religious belief, cannot be a fit matter for civil or political disqualification, I thought I could not illustrate the position clearer, than to demand, “ if tenets of intolerance” be cited as *an excuse* for political disqualification, you have an example in your own church, which can shew you,—not the propriety of the belief; not that a fellowship in the sentiment, can ever justify its being held at all,—but that the holders of it *here*, are not considered as fit objects for civil, or political disqualification.

If I have wrong stated the case I have to apologize for it, and if I was ever to reprint my Pamphlet, I should not hesitate upon *conviction* that I was wrong, to acknowledge my error.

The object of my writing at all was to plead the cause of toleration, and I should not wish to disprove my title (as a friend to it in its most enlarged interpretation) by making an unfounded charge of intolerance against so respectable a body of men.—You are at liberty, Sir, to make what use you chuse of this Letter, and

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful obedient Servant,

H. G. BENNETT.

THE
Origin, History, Doctrines, and Opinions
OF THE
METHODISTS,
FROM THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA PERTHENSIS.

Origin.

METHODISTS, the name given to the followers of the late Rev. JOHN WESLEY, who laid the foundation of this numerous society, and by whose unremitted vigilance and unexampled labours it has attained to its present consequence in the world. In Nov. 1729, he being then a fellow of Lincoln college, Oxford, Mr. Morgan commoner of Christ's Church, Mr. Charles Wesley student, and Mr. Kirkham of Merton College, set apart some evenings for reading the original scriptures, and prayer. Some time after they were joined by Mr. Ingham of Queen's college, Mr. Broughton of Exeter, and Mr. James Hervey, and in 1735 by the celebrated Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD. They began now to move in a more public sphere, appropriating a part of their time for instructing the prisoners, and visiting the sick. They also instituted a fund for the relief of the poor; and in order to accomplish their benevolent design, Mr. John Wesley not only abridged himself of all superfluities, but even of many of the necessaries of life. Their holy department soon attracted the attention of the *College Censors* and students, who discountenanced their proceedings, branded them with many opprobrious epithets, denominated them *Sacramentarians*, or the *Godly Club*, and afterwards *METHODISTS*; which name was first given them by a fellow of Merton College, in allusion to a certain college of physicians who flourished at Rome about the reign of

Nero, and were remarkable for putting their patients under regimen, for which they were termed *Methodistæ*.

In 1735, Mr. John Wesley sailed along with his brother Charles, Mr. Ingham, and Mr. Delamotte, for Georgia, in order to preach the gospel to the Indians. The piety and devotion, which they manifested during the voyage, was highly commendable, and such as bespoke their minds impressed with a due sense of their important undertaking; but failing in their grand design, and some other disagreeable circumstances arising, Mr. John Wesley returned to England, after having been absent near two years, and was succeeded by his valuable friend, the Rev. George Whitfield, a man every way qualified to please and profit his hearers. He arrived at Savannah on the 7th of May 1738, and was received by Mr. Delamotte, and many of Mr. Wesley's hearers. During his abode there he laboured much, and had the honour to be useful in his Lord's vineyard. He returned to England in the close of the same year for the purpose of receiving priest's orders.

On his return to America in 1739, he landed at Philadelphia, and immediately began his spiritual labours, which he continued as he passed through the colonies of Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina; being attended by considerable audiences. Upon his arrival at SAVANNAH, he found the colony almost deserted, which moved him to carry his scheme of building an *Orphan House* into effect, which he had the happiness to see completed through his exertions and the liberal donations of his friends. Upon his third visit to the Western Continent he took a voyage to the *Bermudas Islands*, where his ministry was successfully attended, and some contributions made for the Orphan House at Savannah. Upon his sixth visit to Georgia, he received the thanks of the governor and principal people for the considerable benefit he had done to that colony; a circumstance which tends greatly to wipe off

those reproaches which had been so industriously propagated respecting his avarice. In 1769 he made his 7th and last voyage to America; but notwithstanding his labours were so extensive, yet he formed no separate societies of any note upon that continent. On his different returns to Britain he visited Scotland and Ireland, where he laboured with his usual zeal and popularity, but formed no separate congregations. Those which he formed in England are not of considerable note, except in London; where there are some numerous and respectable congregations, whose conduct is a credit to their worthy founder. It must be acknowledged, that had Mr. Whitfield more fully adopted Mr. Wesley's plan with respect to itinerants, his piety and abilities were such as could not have failed to place him at the head of a numerous body; whereas, by reason of his own journeyings, and the want of proper assistants, those whom he gathered were in general soon scattered abroad, so that the Whitefield Methodists bear a very small proportion to those under the care of Mr. Wesley; the RISE, DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE, PROGRESS, and PRESENT STATE of whom are as follows:

I. Upon Mr. Wesley's return to England he was invited to preach in several churches, but the concourse of people who followed him was so great, that the churches in general were soon shut against him.—However his labours were not in vain; the minds of many were religiously impressed; and about 50 persons agreed to meet together for free conversation, to begin and end with singing and prayer. These he left upon the 13th June 1738, on a visit to the Moravian Brethren in Germany, from whence he returned upon the 16th Sept. It was yet his *desire* and *design* to preach in the established church, as he ever entertained a sincere regard for it, but for the cause above assigned he was not permitted. He therefore preached in *Newgate*, in

some dissenting chapels in London, and in different places in the country where he could obtain admission.

He also visited Oxford and Bristol, and had the happiness to see his labours blessed.

It was at this early period of METHODISM, when most of his valuable friends forsook him, among whom was that justly celebrated character before mentioned, the late Rev. George Whitefield, who during this time had been chiefly employed in America, where he imbibed certain doctrines contrary to those taught by Mr. Wesley. Upon his return to England, in 1741, a temporary separation took place between them, although Mr. Wesley used every possible means to prevent it.

Not long after this William Cudworth & James Relly separated from Mr. Whitefield. These two gentlemen were ANTINOMIANS, avowed enemies to the Law of God, and termed all who preached it *Legalists*. With them preaching the Law was an abomination. They would preach *Christ* as they termed it, though they neither enforced holiness nor good works. These were still denominated Methodists, though differing so widely from them, both in principle and practice. But though Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley differed in sentiment, they lived and died united in heart; for Mr. Whitefield, in his will, written by his own hand, inserts as follows: "I leave a mourning ring to my honoured and dear friends, and disinterested fellow labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, and notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine." We next proceed to state,

II. The DOCTRINE taught by Mr. Wesley and his followers, 1st, They teach, that *man is fallen*; asserting, that when he came forth out of the hands of his Maker, he was pure, and that through his disobedience

to the divine command he lost his original rectitude, and subjected his body to pain and death : Sin

“ Brought death into the world and all our woes ;” depraved all the faculties of the mind, and subjected the soul to endless misery. 2d. *Restoration by Jesus Christ* ; maintaining that his *obedience, sufferings, and death*, were efficacious to atone for the great offence, for “ as by the offence of one, &c.” Rom. vi. 18. They also strongly assert, that the merits of Christ are not confined to any particular elect number, but general, he being the propitiation for the sins of the world.

3dly, *The nature and necessity of repentance*. 4thly, *Justification by faith* ; they renounce all works from having any part in a sinner's justification, asserting that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, but maintain that they will necessarily follow. Their zeal for good works, as the fruits of faith, has led many to denominate them *Legalists*. 5thly, *Sanctification or Christian perfection* ; proving that upon the exercise of justifying faith the work of sanctification is begun, and that if the believer faithfully uses the grace received, he will make sensible advances towards holiness, even till he arrive at a state of purity in this life, or meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Some mistaken persons charge the Methodists with holding absolute perfection attainable, whereas they neither believe *absolute, angelical, nor even paradisaical perfection*, attainable in this life ; only such a perfection as our state admits of ; viz. that grace infused into the soul at justification being brought into maturity, or loving God with the whole heart, which is in Scripture often called being perfect. 6thly, *The salvation of all infants dying in nonage*. 7thly, *The Trinity of the Godhead with the equality of the persons*.

Having thus stated their Doctrine, we proceed to consider.

III. Their DISCIPLINE. It would exceed our limits to transcribe every rule or law which exists for the go-

vernment of so large a body, we shall therefore only mention a few of the most general.

1. Every society is divided into classes consisting of about 12 or 14 persons, one of which (who is judged the best qualified) is appointed the leader. It is his business, 1. To see each person in his class once a week; to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; and to receive what they are willing to give towards the relief of the poor. 2d. To meet the ministers and stewards of the society; to inform them of any who are sick, or walk disorderly; and to pay to the stewards what he has received from his class the week preceding.

2. It is required that all who are received or continue members of the society should evidence their desire of salvation, 1. By refraining from open sin, public amusements, &c. 2d. By doing all the good in their power by acts of mercy and benevolence to others; and, 3. By attending diligently to the ordinances of God.

3. Every approved member receives a TICKET, having a portion of Scripture and a large letter printed upon it, which will procure his admission to any society, either at home or abroad. Its chief use is to procure admission to the LOVE FEAST, a meeting held once every quarter, at which most of the members from the different societies in the circuit attend, and to which none but the members are admitted. This meeting is opened by the superintendant of the circuit with singing and prayer, after which a small quantity of bread and water are distributed among them; which after they have taken as a token of affection to each other, they are at liberty to speak if they find themselves disposed, respecting the providences of God towards them, or the operations of his grace upon their minds, observing due order and regularity—but to prevent im-

position, these tickets are renewed every three months, when each member contributes according to the freedom of his own mind, for the support of the cause in general.

4. Their MINISTERS are not all educated from their youth for that office, as is the case in the national churches: but first enter private members of society. If they walk agreeably to their profession, and are thought by the leading men in office to possess gifts for public usefulness, they are permitted to pray publicly in the class to which they belong; afterwards in the public prayer meetings, and to give an exhortation if occasion require. In case their labours be thus far approved, they receive a plan, and are admitted into the body of local preachers, in which they in general remain for some years, before they are received on trial as *Itinerants*; in which they continue 4 years; at the expiration of which, if approved, they are received into the body of itinerants.

5. The whole body of MEMBERS is divided into different circuits, and 2, 3, 4, or more Ministers are appointed to each, proportioned to its extent; one of whom has the superintendency. As no minister is bound to stay more than one year in a circuit, or allowed to continue longer than three, a change takes place every year which is almost general; and a conference of the ministers is held once a-year. The cities and towns in which these meetings are held, in regular rotation, are LONDON, LEEDS, BRISTOL, and MANCHESTER.

Having in stating the RISE of Methodism traced Mr. Wesley to the dawn of the period from which he became first the contempt, and afterwards the wonder of many in these kingdoms, we proceed to consider

IV. THE PROGRESS OF METHODISM:

I. In ENGLAND, Mr. Wesley, being excluded the churches, and having no places for the accommodation

of his numerous audiences, was at last moved to imitate the example which his LORD had set before him, by preaching in the streets, lanes, and fields:

“ They stood, and under open air ador’d

“ The God, who made both air, earth, heaven,
and sky.”

The societies being much increased in London, Bristol, and other places, and having in vain solicited assistance from the established clergy, he was induced to choose out among themselves those whom he judged the best qualified to instruct the rest. Thus were *Lay Preachers* introduced. Having now teachers after his own heart, they enlarged the sphere of action, and soon formed societies in the counties of York, Wilts, Gloucester, Leicester, Warwick, Lincoln, Nottingham, &c. But as it was in the beginning of Christianity so it was now, they were every where spoken against, and in many places persecuted without any mixture of mercy, or distinction of sex or circumstances—many of the members having their houses beset, their bodies maimed, and their property destroyed; some of their ministers impressed and sent off for soldiers, to the disgrace of magistracy, and of many of the clergy of the established church, who were often the chief instigators of the mob. It must be confessed, however, that the imprudence of some of the members contributed much to the censure and reproach which they met with. In London, in 1762, one George Bell and some others, through their ignorance of the operations of the human mind, were led to conceive that every idea which arose in the mind was the immediate inspiration of the spirit of God. They accordingly asserted, that the world would be destroyed on the 28th of February 1762. Mr. Wesley withstood them, both in public and private, in consequence of which they separated from him under the care of Mr. Tho. Maxfield, one of his preachers. These, though the wildest enthusiasts,

bear the name of *Methodists*, and by their conduct bring a reproach on those with whom they have no connection. However Methodism, rising above the imprudence of its friends, and the opposition of its enemies, overspread the country so much, that in England alone at this day,* there are 80,913 members, and 297 itinerants.

II. In IRELAND early in 1747, Mr. Williams, a minister in the Methodist connection, went to Dublin, and soon formed a small society. Upon informing Mr. Wesley of his success, he immediately went to Ireland, arriving at Dublin on the 9th of August. After preaching in different parts of that kingdom, he returned to England, leaving a Mr. Trembath to assist Mr. Williams. Soon after his return, Mr. CHARLES WESLEY set out for Ireland, and preached the gospel with much diligence and success. In 1748, Mr. Wesley revisited that country, taking along with him some itinerants, to extend their sphere of action; and through whose labour the societies were much increased. Thus far they had proceeded with some degree of peace, when a very violent prosecution commenced, which lasted for upwards of 3 months. A riotous mob, headed by a ballad-singer, and encouraged by the magistrates, committed the most desperate outrages, particularly in Cork, where they entered the place of their assembly, pulled down the preacher, tore out the windows, demolished the pulpit, burnt the seats, fell upon men, women, and children, with swords and clubs, and committed other acts of violence, too shocking to name. Redress was sought for in vain; several depositions were laid before the grand jury, but they did not find one bill against the rioters; on the contrary, they made that memorable presentment, which will be preserved

* From the numbers given, it appears this account was drawn up in the year 1797. C. H.

in their records as a witness to succeeding generations of their *ignorance, injustice, and baseness of heart*.—"We find and present Charles Wesley, to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported." Nine other ministers were presented at the same time; this encouraged the mob, who now scoured the streets day and night, shouting "Five pounds for a *Swaddler's* head;"—the name by which the Methodists are chiefly distinguished in Ireland, being first given to a Mr. Cennick, upon his preaching from these words, "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in *swaddling* clothes, &c." At the Lent assizes, his majesty's judge inquired for the persons presented; upon their standing forth, he was visibly agitated and for some time unable to proceed. He at length called for the evidence, on which the ballad-singer appeared, and after being asked his profession, the judge ordered him to withdraw. No other person appearing, he turned to the ministers, and said, "Gentlemen, there is no evidence against you; you may retire: I am very sorry you have been treated so very improperly. I hope the police of this city will be better attended to for the time to come." Several circuits were now formed and meeting-houses erected, in every part of the kingdom. The towering mountains, the marshy fens, bogs, &c, did not impede their progress. They sought out villages and scattered cottages in the province of Ulster, &c. and pure religion shed her cheering rays, so that it might be said

"Hark! the wastes have found a voice

"Lonely deserts now rejoice."

The societies have continued to increase so much, that, in July 1797, there were in that kingdom 17,000 members and 83 itinerants.

III. IN SCOTLAND.—At the request of Colonel GALATIN, Mr. Wesley accompanied by Mr. CHRISTOPHER HOPPER, visited Musselburgh in 1751, and was

kindly received by many respectable persons in that place. After preaching a few times to numerous and attentive congregations, he departed, leaving Mr. Hopper to minister to them. In 1753, he entered Scotland again, by way of Dumfries, and was respectfully treated at Glasgow, by the Rev. and truly pious Dr. GILLIES. After preaching in his church he repaired to Edinburgh, and passed through Haddington to England. Upon his next visit, in 1757, he preached in the open air wherever he came. In 1761, he again visited North Britain; preached at Dundee, Aberdeen, &c. and at this period had the prospect of many followers, but these hopes were blasted through the republication of one of Mr. James Harvey's pamphlets, by a respectable minister of the church of Scotland, (the late Dr. JOHN ERSKINE,) with a preface, in which he bitterly inveighed against what he called the unsoundness of Mr. Wesley's principles. Societies, however, were formed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, and other places. But the doctrine and discipline being so contrary to the education and genius of the North Britons, their success has been exceeding small, and at this day is far from being adequate to the great expence of keeping ministers in Scotland; there being only 1019 members and 15 itinerants in that kingdom.

IV. The ISLE OF MAN. Mr. Crook, a local preacher, visited this island in 1775, and upon the 11th March preached his first sermon in the Court-House at Douglas. This island was soon after joined to the Whitehaven Circuit, and a considerable society formed at *Cashtown*. Here, as usual, they met with some opposition; the *bishop* prohibiting all rectors, vicars, chaplains, and curates, from administering the sacrament to the preachers, or any of their hearers; but they surmounted all opposition, and formed a circuit in this island, con-

sisting at present of 2750 members, 62 of whom are local preachers.

V. The ISLANDS of JERSEY, GUERNSEY, and ALDERNEY. The island of Jersey was visited by ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY, Esq. a local preacher, in 1785, and in 1786 by Mr. ADAM CLARKE, an itinerant, a man of extensive learning, deep piety and zeal. From thence Mr. Brackenbury visited Guernsey; and, in 1787, Mr. Clarke went to Alderney. In Jersey they met with much opposition, the house in which Mr. Clarke preached being nearly demolished by the mob. At another time a company of rioters were headed by a magistrate, who pulled Mr. Clarke down from the pulpit with his own hands; and then caused the drummer of the St. Aubin militia to drum him out of the town. Mr. Clarke, however, persisted in his visits and labours, till he at last out-weathered the storm, and established regular worship there, when even the very mob revered him. There are in these islands 680 members, and 5 itinerants.

VI. AMERICA,—Some time in 1763, several persons, members of the Methodist society, emigrated from ENGLAND and IRELAND, and settled in various parts of America. A few years after, two local preachers from Ireland began to preach the gospel, the one at New York, the other in Frederick County, in Maryland, and had the happiness to see their labours successful.

About this time Mr. Webb, a lieutenant in the army, preached at New York and Philadelphia, with great success, and with the assistance of his friends erected a chapel in New York, which was the first belonging to the Methodist society in America. Induced by this success, and by an earnest desire for the salvation of mankind, he and some others wrote to Mr. Wesley, earnestly importuning him to send missionaries to that continent; in compliance with which request two were sent, who landed at Philadelphia in 1769. The gospel

continuing to spread, in 1771, two other ministers were sent, and in 1773 two more. At this time they had on that continent near 1000 members, 6 or 7 of whom had become preachers. The Lord still continued to smile on their labours, so that in about 4 years afterwards, they had increased their number of preachers to 40, and of members to near 7,000; besides some hundreds of blacks, whose minds the Lord opened to receive the gospel. Although not united in close fellowship, they have since continued to increase, so that at the last general meeting, held in 1794, the number of preachers employed therein was no less than 400, exclusive of many hundred local ones; the number of white persons in their society was 51,416; and of blacks 16,227; exclusive of the many thousands who are regular attendants on their ministry.

VII. The WEST INDIA ISLANDS. In 1760 Mr. NATHANIEL GILBERT, who had heard the gospel in England, but who was then resident in the island of ANTIGUA, began a meeting of a few people in his own house on the Lord's day, for the purpose of exhortation and prayer. His endeavours being countenanced of God, he was encouraged to extend his sphere of action; and (though he was in no less a station than that of speaker in the house of assembly) he preached the gospel to the blacks, in the midst of great reproach, till he had formed a society of 200 of them. About 22 years ago the scattered remains of his labours were gathered by JOHN BAXTER, one of his majesty's ship-wrights, and a local preacher in the Methodist connection; who went to work in his majesty's harbour at Antigua, devoting his leisure hours to the ministry of the gospel, and formed a society of upwards of 1000 members.—In 1786, four missionaries bound for Nova Scotia were, by stress of weather, obliged to bear off for the West Indies. They landed at Antigua on the 25th December; whence they visited *St. Vincent's*, *St. Christopher's*,

and *St. Eustatius*. In 1788, several more were sent to extend the work the Lord had so signally begun. They landed at Barbadoes on the 9th December. They also visited *Nevis* and *Tortola*. In 1789, they went to *Jamaica*, *Grenada*, and *St. Domingo*. The Methodist society have at present in these islands 12 missionaries, and near 9,000 members.

VIII. AFRICA. There are also in SIERRA LEONE, upon the coast of Africa, 400 persons, members of the Methodist society, of whom the greater part are blacks and mulattoes.

Thus have we traced Methodism through its different stages, in as impartial and candid a manner as possible. We do not mean to say that the founder of this sect was infallible, but he certainly possessed more excellencies and fewer failings, than are found to accompany mankind in general. Some irregularities have arisen in different parts of the connection, but these have been discountenanced, and opposed to the utmost bounds of prudence. Perhaps in nothing is this body so deficient, as in its government; but this imperfection is not of choice but necessity, its extent being so great, and the genius and education of the different countries so contrary to each other, that no regular rules can be established to govern the whole body, the want of which opens a door for disputations and contentions among them, as that which is approved by one circuit or country is exploded by another; for instance, in some places the people wish to have the holy sacrament administered by their own ministers in their own chapels; for which purpose a number of the preachers have been ordained by the imposition of hands, both in Britain and America; but in many places both in England and Ireland the people incline to receive the sacraments in the established church. Both parties are indulged, as the body wishes to become all things to all men, so far as is consistent with a good conscience.

Their ministers, in general, do not possess much literary knowledge, believing that *only* a divine call and qualification are sufficient; but they do not despise human learning: On the contrary they esteem it as serviceable to the congregations of the Lord; and several individuals among them have made considerable proficiency therein.

Their ministers are, in general, men of deep piety, and exemplary conduct. Their labours are unequalled by those of any other sect; many of them travelling a number of miles every day, besides preaching 10 or 12 times every week.

They love the Calvinists as members of Christ, though they do not love their doctrine of absolute unconditional reprobation. Their charity embraces the whole human race; but especially those whom they believe are of the household of faith of *every denomination*,

The members, in general, are very temperate, both in food and clothing; in their dress they imitate the Quakers in *form*, though not in *quality*. They also avoid all places of public amusement, such as theatres, race-courses, ball-rooms, &c.

Their deportment to each other is very affectionate, being ready to sympathize over the distressed, and administer to their wants. This has subjected them to the imposition of designing persons, as it is only needful to adopt the name of a Methodist to insure relief from that generous body.

In the large societies, in London, Leeds, Manchester, &c. they have persons appointed, whom they judge the best qualified, to visit and instruct the sick and pray with them; not only of their own but of other societies, where they can obtain admission; and have different funds instituted for supplying their wants.

Their unwearied exertions for the public good have a just claim upon our commendation, while their num-

ber and deportment entitles them to respect. The whole body at present consists of about 165,000 members, a considerable number of whom have been reclaimed from the most vicious course of life, but now, in general, adorn the gospel of Christ.

Those who wish to be more fully informed of their history and customs, may consult Mr. WESLEY's *Journals* and other writings ; or his *Life* by Dr. COKE and H. MORE. Their doctrines will be found impartially handled in the works of the late Rev. JOHN FLETCHER, vicar of Madely.

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